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ABSTRACT

Because teleworking presents major new challenges to human resource managers, trade unions, and others involved in the development of good employment practices, this book provides practical guidelines for good practice in regard to teleworkers that recognize that teleworking is not a single category, but covers at least five distinct groups with different needs. The guide is based on a study conducted in four European countries--United Kingdom, Greece, the Netherlands, and Sweden. Following an introductory chapter that discusses new forms of work and the study, the following work groups are defined and discussed in the next five chapters of the book: multisite teleworking, tele-homeworking, freelance teleworking, mobile teleworking, and relocated back-offices. The final chapter covers forms of support for teleworkers. The guidelines are based on existing good practice in each area, as described in each chapter. The book encourages employers to regard teleworkers as a variation of existing employees, not a separate category, and to provide the same benefits and working conditions previously negotiated with traditional workers. (KC)

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TELEWORKING: GUIDELINES FOR GOOD PRACTICE

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1. Introduction

The introduction of new information and communications technologies has opened up an unprecedented range of choices in who does what work, when, where and how. It is now technically possible for a wide range of different tasks involving the processing of information to be carried out anywhere that suitable infrastructure is available and for the end-product to be delivered in a matter of minutes to clients anywhere in the world, and for many activities which involve communication to be 'time-shifted' using electronic mail or voice-mail.

However, the majority of workers in Europe are still working under contracts of employment which were designed on the basis that they would be working for predetermined hours, on a fixed and permanent spot on the employer's premises, under the direct control of a manager. Not only do contracts of employment normally specify a fixed and standardised number of hours per day and a fixed number of days per week, there are also a wide range of other social institutions which have been structured on the basis that this is the norm. For instance the opening hours of nurseries, schools, shops and banks assume that most people work a 'normal' week; the rules for claiming compensation for work-related accidents assume a 'normal' workplace; planning and insurance regulations assume a 'normal' (ie non-work) use of domestic premises; welfare benefit systems assume that claimants are either permanently and continuously employed or continuously and completely unemployed, and so on.

As Europe enters the 'information society', there is an increasing misfit between these structures and the new forms of work organisation.

Because of their differing positions in the labour market and in society at large, men and women are likely to be affected differently by this process of restructuring. It is therefore

important to examine the gender impact of these changes in work organisation in order to identify both the new opportunities they open up and the risks which they pose to equality of opportunity.

The opportunities include:

- the chance to introduce new forms of flexibility into working hours, making it easier for both men and women to combine work with their caring responsibilities
- the chance to introduce new forms of work-sharing, thus contributing to a reduction in unemployment
- the chance to relocate work nearer to where people live, once again making it easier for both men and women to spend more time with their families or in leisure or community activities because of the reduction in travelling time
- the chance to develop new jobs, with new skill requirements, with the potential for being more equally available to both male and female applicants than established jobs which have been historically tied to strongly gendered skill requirements. The lack of any requirement for physical strength in these new jobs makes them (at least in principle) particularly resistant to traditional forms of gender stereotyping.
- the chance both to improve the quality of existing services, and to develop new information-based services. These can enhance the quality of life for both men and women and open up new opportunities, by increasing choice and by improving access to skills and knowledge.
- the chance to reinvigorate the economies of remote, rural or deindustrialised areas through the development of new environmentally-friendly industries
- the chance to capitalise on the cultural diversity of Europe. Its languages and artistic heritage can be used as a basis for new multi-media products and services for a global market, thus simultaneously both creating employment and safeguarding the rights of cultural minorities to express themselves in their own languages and preserve their cultural traditions.

The risks include:

- an erosion of the forms of worker protection which have been negotiated through the social dialogue over the years and are enshrined in existing collective agreements and labour protection legislation

- a growing polarisation of the workforce between a protected 'core' of (predominantly male) full-time, permanent employees with access to continuing staff development and employer-provided benefits, and a (predominantly female) 'periphery' of casual, part-time, temporary or self-employed workers who lack access to training, pensions and other welfare benefits and are largely excluded from representation within the Social Dialogue.
- 'social dumping' resulting from the export of jobs across national boundaries
- new stresses and damage to family life caused by the increasing interpenetration of work and domestic life
- an erosion of the public services (such as childcare facilities and public transport) which permit free choice by individuals in their hours and location of work
- a loss of on-the-job training opportunities caused by a shrinkage in the 'core' workforce, bringing with it a reduction in the value of the human capital of the European workforce.

We now stand at a crossroads in the development of European society. Decisions made now, by policy-makers, by employers, by trade unions and by individuals, either consciously or by default, will shape the new social institutions of the information society, and will determine the extent to which these new opportunities are maximised, and the risks minimised.

Although employment is by no means the only dimension of these changes which requires attention, it is a very important one, and the Social Partners will have a crucial role to play in the formation of the information society, in particular in determining the extent to which it will provide an environment conducive to equality of opportunity between men and women.

The focus of this report is therefore on employment practice, in particular on the employment of teleworkers. It draws on the results of a research project on Gender and Teleworking, carried out in 1995-96, which was supported by a grant from the Equal Opportunities Unit of the European Commission's Directorate General for Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs (DGV).

The project, which was co-sponsored by Analytica and Wordbank in the UK, the TNO in the Netherlands, the ADA Women's Technology Center in Greece and the Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees in Sweden, involved an interdisciplinary collaboration between specialists in all four countries.

The work of the project included carrying out a detailed overview of teleworking in each country, including an overview of the attitudes of the social partners, and conducting an international survey of self-employed teleworkers throughout Europe. These are the subject of separate reports. However, in each country the team members also collected and analysed collective agreements and good practice guidelines covering teleworking as well as examples of good practice.

This report represents a synthesis of the results of this process. The research has been carried out by Katerina Arvanitaki and Vangelio Trova of ADA Women's Technology Centre in Greece, by Dr Ewa Gunnarsson in Sweden, by Thea Weijers of the TNO in the Netherlands, and by Sarah Podro and Ursula Huws of Analytica in the UK.

The work has also been informed by helpful comments from a wide range of employers, trade unionists and researchers in each country. In particular, we would like to acknowledge the helpful contributions of Maria Stratigaki, of the DGV Equal Opportunities Unit, of Professor Swasti Mitter from the United Nations University Institute of Technology, of Nicola Armstrong from Massey University, New Zealand, and of Jane Paul from BECTU who attended a meeting in Brussels in January, 1996 to discuss a first draft of these recommendations, and of Giles Trentham, Director of Wordbank, who contributed an employer's perspective to the project from its inception, as well as giving practical support to its research.

The guidelines which are presented in this report are not intended as precise blueprints nor as the basis for statutory regulation. The reason for this is that it is the project team's view that it is not possible to define teleworking as a separate category of work. Indeed, to attempt to do so is fundamentally to misunderstand the nature of the restructuring of employment made possible by the new technologies.

In our view, the main feature of these changes is not so much that they make it possible to work in place A rather than place B, or between the hours of X and Y instead of the hours Y and Z, but that they introduce a new range of choices in the time and place of work. In other words they make it easier to work *anywhere* and at *any time*.

Rather than seeing teleworking as a specific type of work, we prefer to view it as a component part of many different kinds of

work, which are not defined solely by the fact that they have become delocalised but by a whole variety of other features.

In surveying the kinds of work currently regarded as teleworking, we have identified an enormous range of different occupational groups, different levels of seniority, different industrial sectors, different working hours, different degrees of mobility, different working conditions and different contractual arrangements. To attempt to subsume these enormous variations within a single definition would be to produce a category so broad as to be virtually meaningless. It would also deny the dynamic nature of the changes currently taking place, which are constantly taking new forms and affecting new categories of employees and will continue to do so in ways which not even the bravest prophet can predict accurately.

Having said that, we nevertheless feel that it is important to identify some of the main forms of delocalisation of work currently taking place. A survey of the empirical evidence has enabled us to identify five main categories of teleworking in which the terms and conditions of employment differ significantly from those normally to be found amongst employees working on-site in a traditional office.[1]

These are:

1. Work which is partly based in the office and partly in the home, which we refer to in the ensuing pages as 'multi-site teleworking'.
2. Work which is based wholly in the home and carried out for a single employer, referred to in this report as 'tele-homeworking'.
3. Work which is wholly based in or from the home and carried out on a freelance basis for multiple employers, referred to in this report as 'freelance teleworking'.

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[1] These categories, which were presented in Huws U, *Follow-up to the White Paper: Teleworking, Social Europe Supplement 3, 1995* are substantially the same as those identified by other analysts of teleworking, *eg* Gillespie A, Richardson R and Cornford J, *Review of Telework in Britain: Implications for Public Policy*, Centre for Urban and Regional Development Studies, Newcastle upon Tyne, February, 1995 and Pennings F, *The Legal and Contractual Situation of Teleworkers: the Aspects Related to Social Security*, Draft Report to the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 1996.

4. Mobile teleworking, whereby workers spend much of their working time on a variety of different sites, such as customers' premises, and use portable equipment to keep in touch with the employer.
5. Work which is carried out at a distance on the employer's premises, referred to in this report as 'relocated back-offices'.

We recognise that the term 'teleworking' is also used to describe other forms of remote working, such as distributed team-working and work carried out in telecottages or other premises owned by third parties. However the focus of this report is on employment conditions and we do not consider that these forms are sufficiently distinctive in this respect to warrant separate treatment in these guidelines.

In terms of its conditions of employment, for instance, distributed team working is normally indistinguishable from other forms of on-site working; if it involves more than one location then it can be treated as a form of multi-site teleworking.

Similarly, workers in telecottages are either freelance, in which case they should be treated as freelance teleworkers, or work full-time in the telecottage in which case they should be treated either as employees in a relocated back-office or as direct employees of the telecottage, depending on their individual circumstances.

The guidelines which follow are divided into two parts. The first (Chapters 1-6) is addressed specifically to employers and to the trade unions which negotiate with them. The second (Chapter 7) is addressed to other agencies concerned with the development of employment opportunities at a local or national level, which may, depending on the national context, include training agencies, local or regional government organisations or economic development agencies. The guidelines are intended as a starting-point for the development of good employment practice at a local or sectoral level and not as a basis for statutory regulation. This is not, however, to deny that there may well be a case to made for statutory protection of some groups of teleworkers in some circumstances. The point we would wish to make here is that such protection should not seek to address them *in their capacity as teleworkers* but only insofar as they fall within some other social category which can be regarded as particularly vulnerable in the labour market.

If, for instance, it were to be shown that mobile teleworkers were working such long hours and undergoing such stress that their ability to drive safely was affected, then it would appear logical to bring them within the scope of any existing legislation which restricts the number of consecutive hours to be worked by other workers whose work involves driving.

To take another example, teleworkers whose work involves intensive VDT use should be brought within the scope of the general health and safety regulations governing VDT work, and means found to ensure that these can be implemented regardless of the location of work.

Similarly, if tele-homeworkers are found to be suffering from low wages and lack of employment protection, then any measures devised to protect 'traditional' homeworkers in manufacturing industries should be extended to include them.

Such questions must be the subject of other, more detailed studies.

In the meanwhile, we hope that the guidelines which follow will provide a useful starting-point for the development of good practice in the employment of teleworkers. We hope they will enable employers and other agencies concerned with the development of employment policy to take advantage of the many new opportunities for improving growth and competitiveness offered by the new technologies while simultaneously opening up new choices and opportunities for their workers, regardless of whether they are men or women.

2. Multi-site Teleworking

Surveys have consistently shown that the opportunity to spend one or two days a week working at home, whilst still retaining a base in a collective office environment, is the preferred choice of a high proportion of office workers, and growing numbers of employers are now beginning to offer selected workers the opportunity to become part-time teleworkers.

We have come across many examples where such arrangements have worked extremely well for both employers and employees. Ingredients of success include:

1. The opportunity to work partially at home should be made available equally to both men and women and should be decided according to agreed criteria which are known to both managers and workers. Employers should avoid situations where being allowed to work from home is seen as a 'perk' available only to a selected few on the basis of manager preference. They should also avoid situations where this form of teleworking is seen as an option only for special groups, such as women with young children or people with disabilities. Neither should it be seen as suitable only for workers doing particular types of work, such as routine or repetitive work. Any job which does not require a visible physical presence could, in principle, be amenable to remote working.
2. The choice to work in this way should always be voluntary. No worker should be obliged to work from home against his or her will and teleworkers should have the right to return to fully office-based employment if they wish.
3. Teleworkers should be informed of any job vacancies or opportunities for promotion in the organisation and encouraged to apply for them. If on-site staff are normally informed by such means as notices on noticeboards, then alternative means should be found of notifying remote workers.

4. Where there is recognised machinery for collective bargaining, trade unions should be fully involved in the negotiation of the terms and conditions of employment for multi-site teleworkers. Teleworkers should usually be covered by the same collective agreements as office-based workers, including any agreements concluded after teleworking has commenced.

5. The change to multi-site teleworking should not be accompanied by any reduction in terms and conditions of employment. Teleworkers should continue to benefit from full employee status and any associated benefits on the same basis as on-site employees.

6. Multi-site teleworkers should be covered by the same appraisal schemes and have access to the same opportunities for career development as other staff. In addition, they should receive special training to prepare them for working from home, including health and safety training. Wherever possible, training should be provided in person; teleworkers should not be expected to train themselves from manuals when on-site staff are given face-to-face tuition.

7. The successful management of teleworking depends crucially on mutual trust. Attempts to use machine-monitoring to track staff performance are counter-productive because they destroy this relationship of trust. Managers of multi-site teleworkers should be trained in the use of modern management techniques which involve the mutual negotiation of targets and the identification of appropriate performance measures.

8. Where necessary, managers of multi-site teleworkers and the teleworkers themselves should receive training in effective communication methods. Managers of teleworkers should make explicit arrangements for regular communication with each teleworker, so that there are clear procedures for communicating, and teleworkers are fully informed about whom to contact and how in the event of any specific work-related problem. To avoid unnecessary intrusion into personal and family life, these individually-negotiated agreements should contain clear information about times when teleworkers should *not* be contacted at home, and these limitations should be adhered to. Full use should be made of messaging services, voice-mail, E-mail *etc.* in order to ensure that teleworkers' personal lives are protected.

9. Multi-site teleworking should not be regarded as an automatic solution to the problems of combining work with caring responsibilities. It is best seen as part of a broad package of equal opportunities measures which include flexi-time schemes, career break schemes, the provision of workplace crèches or childcare subsidies, and job-sharing. It should also be

remembered that teleworking is not an alternative to the provision of childcare facilities or subsidies, and that it may not be an option for all people with caring responsibilities.

10. Both teleworkers and their managers should be reminded that teleworking is not a solution to childcare problems in that it is not possible to work and look after a child simultaneously, although teleworking can offer an indirect way of managing childcare more effectively by making it easier to time-shift tasks. It is necessary for satisfactory alternative childcare arrangements to be made during the hours when teleworkers are working from home.

11. Multi-site teleworking should not be used as a means of extending working hours. Any hours required in excess of the normal working week should be treated as overtime: *ie* the workers should have the right to refuse to work them without notice and, if they do work these extra hours should have the right to take time off in lieu or be paid overtime rates, whichever is the normal practice at the place of work.

12. Employers of multi-site teleworkers should develop clear policies on health and safety and insurance, including the development of procedures to ensure that teleworkers are covered for all the same risks as on-site staff, and that all teleworkers and their managers are fully informed of their rights and responsibilities. If these procedures involve inspection of the teleworker's home, then such inspections should take place by mutual consent and women teleworkers should have the right to the presence of another woman if the inspector is a man. If there are possible implications for the teleworker's own home insurance, due to the presence of special equipment in the home, the employer should notify teleworkers, and endeavour to assist with any dispute that may arise with insurance companies.

13. Teleworkers should not normally spend more than a proportion of their working time at home and should be invited regularly to meetings at the workplace to avoid social isolation. The amount of time spent on site will vary depending on the type of work involved, but should never be less than one day per week and should normally be more than this.

14. Employers should provide multi-site teleworkers with all the equipment necessary to work effectively and safely from their homes, including, where necessary, a dedicated telephone line and an answering machine or other device for taking messages during periods when the teleworker is off-duty, adaptations to make equipment suitable for people with disabilities, and lockable storage equipment.

15. If multi-site teleworkers are not able to work for reasons outside their control (such as equipment breakdown, failure in

the mainframe, or interruptions in the supply of telecommunications or electricity) they should not be penalised for this: *ie* the lost time should be treated as working time.

16. Employers should reimburse all work-related expenses incurred by multi-site teleworkers, including additional insurance premiums related to work from home.

17. Where such facilities exist, employers should consider the use of alternative sites, such as neighbourhood offices, as locations for multi-site teleworking.

18. Teleworking schemes should be kept under continuous review with regular opportunities to appraise their development and reconsider whether they still constitute the best solution for both the employer and the teleworkers.

Examples of good practice

Wiltshire County Council, offers its employees the option of working wholly or partly from home. If employees are considered suitable their work space is checked for adequate health and safety conditions. Employees are given a separate written contract regarding homeworking conditions and remain permanent full-time employees of the council. All equipment is provided including lockable cabinets for confidential information, and is covered by the County Council's insurance policy. Telephone costs are reimbursed.

Managers are also given guidance on communication, and how to combat isolation that may be experienced by employees. Possible solutions suggested are: regular briefing and supervision; regular team meetings; visits to the office; newsletters; social events; local networks of homeworkers who can meet or keep in touch.

IBM, Germany has negotiated a teleworking agreement which covers all its white-collar staff in Germany. This specifies that home-based work is a voluntary option. Employees are provided with a written agreement referring to the arrangements and existing company regulations which remain in force, and to relevant legal requirements. There is no change to the workers' employee status, and regulations regarding sickness and holiday pay remain the same as for on-site employees. Equipment necessary for work off-site is provided by the company free of charge.

Working hours are divided between the home and the workplace and particular emphasis is put on the need for social and work-related contact with colleagues, managers and employee representatives. So, for example, if there is no departmental meeting on the day when employees are working on site they can apply to their manager for one to be held if they feel it to be important because, for instance, they have been absent from work for a long period.

Employees are reimbursed for heating and cleaning costs (taxable), telephone costs (on provision of receipts), and the installation of an extra business line if deemed necessary.

The company also provides a three-page document on setting up an external workplace including guidelines on equipment, ergonomics and household contents insurance.

AXA Assurances, a French insurance company based in Belbeuf, has introduced a scheme whereby staff work four days a week in the office and at home on Wednesdays. This day has been selected because it is a half day in the schools and a number of parents experience childcare difficulties then. Where the work requires the use of a computer, the company installs a computer with an on-line link to the teleworker's home. In other cases, workers prefer to have a day away from the screen and organise their work so they can do other types of task on Wednesdays.

British Telecom (BT) has negotiated a teleworking agreement with STE (The Society of Telecom Executives), covering staff on managerial and professional grades. Teleworkers remain full employees of the company, and pay and conditions are unchanged.

Teleworking is voluntary and is open to all managerial and professional staff subject to the agreement of the line manager that the job is suitable for teleworking. Teleworkers wishing to return to on-site working can normally do so. If the nature of the job does not make this possible, they are given the same priority as other redeployees to be provided with posts at the same grade and location. If the job is changed for operational reasons, BT is committed to make every effort to find a suitable alternative post which also allows teleworking.

The union is kept informed of all developments relating to teleworking and monitors these at a national and local level.

The agreement stipulates that employees working from home must be kept well informed of developments in the company, consulted on changes, and receive all the normal publications and newsletters. The company's appraisal, counselling, training and personal development arrangements apply to teleworkers on the same basis as office-based staff.

The agreement also covers company provision, maintenance and insurance of equipment; the applicability of the health and safety agreements, health and safety inspections and reimbursement of increased heating and lighting expenses.

An anonymous insurance company, quoted by Incomes Data Services[1], has negotiated an agreement with the Manufacturing, Science and Finance Union (MSF) which includes an allowance of up to £400 (about 488 ECU) to purchase suitable office furniture; a one-off taxable allowance of £200 (about 244 ECU) towards upgrading the workstation, payable after three years; an agreement with the Inland Revenue to add an additional £275 (about 355 ECU) to employee's personal tax allowances; current arrangements for lunch expenses, and the metropolitan/large town allowance to remain. All stationery is supplied and postage costs reimbursed.

The company has also agreed an extensive code of practice which includes the following principles:

1. Teleworkers who work primarily for one employer on a regular basis should be classed as employees.
2. Homeworkers should be eligible for the same benefits as on-site employees.
3. They should receive the same rates of pay as on-site workers engaged in the same work or work of equal value.
4. They should receive additional payments for working overtime, or for working unsociable hours, where these unsociable hours are the result of extra work pressure caused by the employer and not of the worker's own choosing, on the same basis as on-site employees.
5. When homeworkers who have previously worked on site move to a home base or homeworkers move back on site their employment should be treated as continuous for the purposes of calculating pension, sick pay or maternity entitlement or any other seniority-related right or benefit.

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[1] Incomes Data Service, *Teleworking: IDS Study 551*, IDS April, 1994

6. Trade unions with a legitimate claim to represent homeworkers in the industry should be supplied with the means to give recruitment literature to homeworkers and invite them to meetings.

The Swedish Federation for Professional Employees (TCO), organises most of the teleworker employees in Sweden, and has been working on a set of telework guidelines for the last year.

The TCO argues that teleworking should only ever be part time, and that work should be organised in such a way that the teleworker still has access to skills development and training as well as time for social contact and exchange of experiences with colleagues on site. The guidelines apply to part-time home-based teleworkers with employee status only.

The union stresses that teleworkers should consult widely with the union, colleagues and family on the implications of working from home before deciding to move off site, and that this decision should always be voluntary, with the option of moving back to the workplace when they choose. Pay, leave and other conditions, including health and safety protection should be the same as for on-site employees.

The TCO emphasises the importance of having a written contract between the employer and the employee, and the union is currently working on a collective agreement with employers. In the meantime it has developed a model agreement for employers and teleworkers which includes the following principles:

i. Home-based telework refers to work done by employees for a long or short period of time from home, or from another place specifically agreed. Organisationally, telework is part of the main workplace.

ii. Home-based telework should be voluntary for the employee and beneficial for both the employer and the employee.

iii. Teleworkers should be subject to the same conditions regarding working hours, as laid down by the Act on Working Hours, as on-site workers, including rules regarding overtime.

iv. The content and quantity of work are regulated by agreement between the manager and the teleworker. Telework should not limit social contact with colleagues or skill and career development. Therefore an agreed minimum number of days per week should be spent on site.

v. When and where teleworkers are available should be regulated by the manager. Consideration should be given to the requirements of efficient production as well as the teleworker's opportunities to combine work and family life.

vi. The company switchboard and departmental secretary should be informed of teleworkers' location and availability. Teleworkers and managers should always be clear about how the teleworker can be reached by colleagues and external contacts and there should be an established system for informing the company if teleworkers are absent (due to sickness, caring for sick children, visiting clients *etc.*). The employer is responsible for arranging a substitute if needed.

vii. When work is performed at home or at any other telework location, it should be treated as equivalent to the main workplace. Reimbursement of travel costs is calculated from the telework location.

viii. The employer is responsible for the provision of necessary equipment, its installation (and removal where necessary) and all expenses relating to it. The equipment can only be used for the employee's work. All adaptations to equipment shall be carried out by technical staff appointed by the employer.

ix. The employer is responsible for insuring the equipment. Damages to the teleworkers' home by the equipment are normally covered by their home insurance. The employer pays for personal risk and any loss of bonuses.

x. The workspace should be designed and furnished in such a way that it is suitable ergonomically and environmentally. The expense involved in any adaptation is to be paid for by the employer, as are telephone costs, electricity, cleaning of the workspace and other overheads. The employer should also compensate the teleworker for use of the workspace in a reasonable way, which includes taking into account the consequences of tax regulations for the individual.

xi. The employer has the responsibility for ensuring that the teleworker has a safe environment to work in which will not cause damage or injury. This means, among other things, that the employer is responsible for the safety of equipment. Employees, on the other hand, are expected to follow the recommendations they have been given and be as careful as is necessary to avoid jeopardising their own health or causing accidents. The employer also has access to the teleworkplace.

xii. A month's notice may be given by either the employee or the employer to end the telework arrangement. Thereafter the employee returns to the workplace.

xiii. **The telework relationship should be monitored on an annual basis. Teleworkers should commit themselves to taking part in a review which should cover, amongst other things:**

a) pros and cons for the individual and the company

b) social isolation

c) work environment/workload

d) opportunities and problems

e) an evaluation of the scope of the agreement

The Dutch Ministry of Traffic and Transport has also produced guidelines, which state that:

1. Telework will take place on a voluntary basis. Neither the employee nor the employer can be forced into teleworking.
2. To decide whether someone can be a teleworker one should look at:
   a) the suitability of the worker for telework
   b) the confidentiality of the information they work with
   c) whether a minimum number of workers on the premises can be guaranteed
   d) whether the home situation of the worker allows working at home
   e) whether everyone concerned (worker, colleagues, manager) agrees that teleworking is acceptable.
3. The decision to introduce teleworking is made by the head of department based on the considerations mentioned above.
4. The teleworker and the head of department will agree in writing:
   a) the number of teleworking days
   b) the freedom to choose which days to telework
   c) whether and how the teleworker can be reached on teleworking days
   d) the equipment required
   e) the furnishing *etc.* of the workplace
   f) compensation for expenses
   g) data security procedures
5. A telework arrangement can be terminated at any time by either of the parties concerned. If the head of department decides to terminate it, he will inform the teleworker by letter, stating his arguments for the decision.

6. The teleworker can set their own hours unless other arrangements have been made with his supervisor. The teleworker will not receive compensation for working unsocial hours unless they work at irregular hours at the request of the supervisor.
7. The employer is responsible for the workplace. The teleworker will have to show that the workplace at home is acceptable. The employer has the right to check whether this is the case. A visit to the home from the employer has to be announced a day beforehand.
8. As regards equipment, two situations are possible: either the employer loans the equipment to the teleworker, in which case the employer remains responsible for insurance, maintenance *etc.* or the teleworker uses his or her own equipment in which case the teleworker is responsible for insurance and maintenance. The equipment will have to meet certain standards.
9. The employer will provide the software while the teleworker agrees to deal with that software as required in laws on copyright.
10. Teleworkers using their own equipment are compensated up to the maximum which can be claimed against tax.
11. The teleworker will use his own telephone and will be compensated according to the general rules (decision of September 22 1977, Stbl 527).
12. Travel expenses between home and workplace will be compensated according to the general rules (decision 1989).
13. The teleworker will not receive compensation for the use of his home as a workplace.
14. Information that is classified as 'very secret' cannot be used in a telework situation. (*cf* the Statute on security of automated information systems 1989).
15. The supervisor will consult with the system manager to determine which security procedures the teleworker has to follow.
16. The employer will train potential teleworkers in the use of equipment and telecommunications. Training will be carried out during working hours and at the expense of the employer.

3. Tele-homeworking

Teleworking which is fully home-based for a single employer typically involves low-skilled work, such as data entry, typing or telephone answering, and is often associated with poorer working conditions than multi-site teleworking. Surveys[1] have shown that this form of teleworking is most likely to be associated with payment by results, nominal self-employed status, unpredictability in the supply of work and low pay. It is almost invariably carried out by women, and in many ways bears a closer resemblance to traditional forms of clerical homeworking than it does to the sorts of multi-site teleworking carried out by professional or executive staff.

This form of teleworking, more than any other, requires special vigilance if it is not to become exploitative and will, if allowed to develop in an uncontrolled manner, run the risk of bringing all forms of teleworking into disrepute, thus impeding the development of other forms of teleworking which have the potential for bringing benefits to workers. Indeed, if a case is to be made for introducing a minimum statutory level of protection for tele-homeworkers, it is the needs of this group which should be addressed by such regulation.

There is, however, sufficient evidence of good practice in this field to indicate that this form of teleworking is not necessarily negative in its effects. Responsible employers in this category will ensure that:

1. All tele-homeworkers are provided with a clear, written, agreement, giving the name and address of the legally responsible employer and setting out the rights and responsibilities of both parties. Such an agreement should

[1] *eg* Huws U, *Teleworking in Britain. Research Series No. 18*, Employment Department, October, 1995.

include information on the nature of the work to be done and the expected working hours, the basis of payment and the rate of pay, the expenses for which the employer will pay, and the procedure to be followed in the event of any disagreement between the two parties.

2. While the employment status of tele-homeworkers will depend on a number of specific factors, including the relevant national statutory context, it should normally be assumed that if the teleworker is working for a single employer then employee status applies. If employee status is disputed, then the burden of proof should be on the employer, rather than the teleworker.

3. Employers should abide by any prevailing requirements, whether statutory or in collective agreements, in relation to the payment of minimum wages, holiday provision, sickness leave, maternity rights or pension provision. Where these are provided for on-site staff then benefits should be provided on a comparable basis to tele-homeworkers. The principle of equal pay for work of equal value should apply regardless of the location where the work is carried out.

4. Tele-homeworkers should be provided with all the materials and equipment necessary to do their job effectively and safely and, where necessary, given training in their safe use. This should include any special equipment needed by people with disabilities.

5. Wherever possible, tele-homeworkers should be paid on the basis of their time rather than on piece-rates or other forms of payment by results. If payment by results is unavoidable, then when calculating rates of pay, employers should take account of any additional responsibilities or tasks which teleworkers need to carry out which are not required of on-site workers. These might include such tasks as installing new software, checking or correcting, filling in forms or other administrative tasks, or fetching or delivering work. Account should also be taken of the difficulty of the tasks in hand, for instance work involving complex desk-top publishing should be paid at higher rates than simple copy-typing.

6. There should be a clear agreement between tele-homeworkers and their managers as to the standards of work expected and the procedures to be followed if there is a change in the brief, if unexpected problems occur or if the work is not up to standard.

7. Where tele-homeworkers are 'on-call', with no guarantee of work, a retainer should be paid for periods without work. Wherever possible, employers should endeavour to ensure an even flow of work.

8. Tele-homeworkers should be paid promptly and given an itemised pay-slip when they are paid, indicating the amount and nature of any deductions (such as social security payments).

9. Wherever possible, tele-homeworkers should be kept informed about training opportunities and vacancies for on-site work which may arise within the organisation, and encouraged to apply for them.

10. Where these are not directly supplied by the employer, tele-homeworkers should be reimbursed for work-related expenses including:

    a) travel costs for picking up and delivering work

    b) stationery, telephone calls and postage costs

    c) waiting time

    d) any other costs related to specific projects, *eg*, special software (including virus protection software)

    e) installation, rental and call costs of extra telephone lines

    f) maintenance and running costs of equipment and costs of any adaptations required

    g) heating and lighting

    h) ergonomically suitable desks and chairs, if necessary adapted to suit particular disabilities.

Examples of good practice

The London Borough of Enfield, in 1989 decided to recruit home-based workers to carry out the database management for its Revenue Support section (responsible for collecting local taxes). Fifty-nine teleworkers were recruited and are now full employees of the Council with the same rights and benefits as on-site staff.

4. Freelance Teleworking

In many ways, freelance teleworking represents a continuation of traditional forms of self-employment rather than a radical new departure. Nevertheless, the current restructuring of employment has been accompanied by an unprecedented growth in freelance working, and the new technologies have opened this up as a viable option for many occupations which have traditionally been based in the office of an employer.

Because of the general growth in home-based working in the informal sector, the boundaries have sometimes become rather blurred between genuinely freelance working, undertaken for a variety of different employers, and home-based working for a single employer under the direction of that employer, which was described in the last section.

In this section, we examine good practice in the employment of genuine freelances, that is workers who have freely chosen to set up in a self-employed capacity, with the appropriate tax and national insurance (social security) status and who, even if the majority of their work is for one or two regular clients, still have the capacity to work for others. The most appropriate contractual arrangement for such workers is a contract for the supply of services, rather than a contract of employment.

Good practice in the employment of freelance teleworkers includes:

1. A clear written contract specifying the work to be carried out, the basis of payment, the time and form of delivery, the ownership of copyright, the rate and schedule of payment and the procedure to be followed in the event of any disagreement between the parties.
2. Where the work to be carried out is comparable to work done in-house, then the rate of payment for freelance teleworkers

should be higher than that for equivalent in-house staff, to reflect the extra risk and higher costs involved in freelance working. The cost of attending meetings (including travelling time and special transport for disabled teleworkers) should be included in the calculation of such costs.

3. Where the duration of work is difficult to quantify in advance, freelance teleworkers should be paid on a time basis rather than piece rates. Freelance teleworkers paid on this basis should be entitled to rest breaks and time off for medical or ante-natal appointments on the same basis as on-site staff. If freelance teleworkers are employed on time-based contracts of longer than a month, then they should be entitled to holiday credits and sick pay on a (pro rata) comparable basis with on-site staff.
4. Payment should be made promptly, at least within 28 days of receipt of invoice. Where contracts extend beyond four weeks, interim payments should be made.
5. The employer should reimburse the costs of any out-of-pocket expenses incurred by freelance teleworkers in the course of carrying out their work.
6. The contributions of freelance teleworkers should be appropriately acknowledged in any information products resulting from their work.
7. Freelance teleworkers should have the right to be represented by their trade unions if they so choose.
8. Clear procedures should be laid out as to the procedure to be followed in the event of grievances; of a change of brief; of a change of schedule; or of a change of working practices. Freelance teleworkers should be reimbursed for any extra time involved in accommodating these changes.
9. Where freelance teleworkers are required to follow house styles or use project-specific software or equipment they should be provided with appropriate training and technical support.
10. Wherever possible, freelance work opportunities should be openly advertised in media which are targeted at women as well as men, both to avoid the perpetuation of relative privilege which tends to accompany word-of-mouth recruitment and to ensure a high quality of work, by tapping into a broad pool of talent.
11. Employers of freelance teleworkers should avoid discriminating on the grounds of pregnancy or having young children, as well as on the grounds of disability or race.
12. Where national or sectoral schemes exist for the training of freelances, employers should co-operate with them, draw them to the attention of the freelance teleworkers who work for them and encourage them to attend.

13. Employers should take account of the health and safety of freelance teleworkers, not only in matters relating to the safe use of equipment but also in relation to setting realistic deadlines so that teleworkers are not obliged to work unduly long hours without breaks.

Examples of Good Practice

In the British broadcasting industry, employers associations and unions in the independent production sector have negotiated agreements covering freelance workers which include:

- access to a flexible pension scheme whereby both the employer and the worker contribute four per cent of earnings for every week worked for an employer in the scheme to a pension fund with full transferability
- scheduling arrangements and agreements covering freelance teleworkers which include holiday credits, sick pay and procedures for dealing with complaints of discrimination and with health and safety issues
- access to crèche facilities at cinema and television studios for freelance workers when they are employed there
- health and safety rights including special health and safety representation on a comparable basis to employees.

In 1986, media unions in the UK also negotiated with employers' associations in the independent production sector to set up a training scheme for freelances, **Jobfit,** providing technical training both on and off the job. The scheme was administered by a council 50 per cent of whose members were employer representatives and 50 per cent from the trade union. It was funded by a levy of 0.25 per cent of production budgets up to a ceiling of £6,500 (about 7,930 ECU) on all employers in the sector. The off-the-job training courses were designed to provide freelance workers with technical skills, while the on-the-job training was designed to provide practical work experience and help trainees develop a range of contacts in the industry which would enable them to function effectively as freelances. The employers benefited from the presence of trainees in their organisations and the scheme was so successful that it has now been superseded by a new freelance training scheme, supported by **Skillset**, the Industry Training Organisation (ITO) concerned with the development of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) for the sector. All the major broadcasting organisations contribute to the fund although the largest proportion continues to be

provided by a voluntary levy on all productions by members of the Producers Alliance for Cinema and Television (PACT).

The government funds specific NVQ-related projects. The principle of union involvement in management has been maintained.

During the 1970s and 1980s a number of **British publishers** included freelance clauses in their collective agreements with staff which linked the freelance rates for editorial and design staff to equivalent staff rates. Typically the freelance daily rate is set at 120 per cent of the equivalent staff rate in recognition of the extra expenses incurred by freelances. This means that freelances are automatically included in any pay increase which is negotiated.

5. Mobile Teleworking

Very little research has been carried out on mobile teleworking. What little there is,[1] suggests that most of the problems of mobile workers are very different from those experienced by home-based workers, although they too may suffer from a sense of isolation from the mainstream of office life. Particular difficulties concern the ergonomic problems associated with using portable equipment in places which are not designed for work, and long hours. The latter become particularly important in cases where mobile workers are paid by commission, or by results, rather than a guaranteed salary.

Good practice should include:

1. Involvement of the mobile workforce in the choice of equipment, and full training and technical support, including training in its safe use.
2. Limits on the amount of time to be spent continuously 'on the road', with regular breaks.
3. The opportunity for mobile teleworkers to attend face-to-face meetings with colleagues and/or managers at least once per week — ideally no more than 80 per cent of working time should be spent away from the office.
4. The opportunity for mobile teleworkers to apply for vacancies for on-site or multi-site working should they arise within the organisations.
5. A clear agreement between mobile teleworkers and their managers about communications patterns and frequency, including rules about times during which teleworkers should *not* be interrupted, procedures to follow in the event of problems, and advance notice of any changes to teleworkers' schedules which might affect their working hours or the intensity of work.

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[1] Huws U, 'Pinning down the mobile worker' in *Practical Computing*, March 1990.

6. **Employers should endeavour to ensure as even a flow of work as possible for any given mobile teleworker, taking account of the fact that they may have domestic commitments which do not allow for unscheduled changes in working hours.**
7. Opportunities for mobile teleworking should be offered to women as well as men and advertised in media which are targeted at both male and female audiences.
8. Where people with childcare responsibilities are under-represented amongst mobile teleworkers, employers should explore the option of redesigning the jobs, for instance by introducing the option of job-sharing, or part-time working, to make them more attractive to those with limited time availability. This might well have the added advantage of reducing fatigue-related stress amongst these workers.

Examples of good practice

British Telecom (BT) has negotiated an agreement with the Society of Telecom Executives (STE) covering mobile teleworkers who are employed as field managers. This agreement evolved through different stages of negotiation and via various disputes, so the terms are spread over several documents. This is a consolidated summary of their contents:

1. Field managers are graded within the main BT managerial structure, and at the standard grade for first line engineering managers.
2. On-target earnings are (approximately) equal to the standard pay point for other managers on the same grade. There is the facility to earn more than this, if targets are exceeded. Base pay (*ie* pay which is not performance or target-related) accounts for at least 80 per cent of on-target earnings for all field managers. This proportion may be reviewed over the longer term. London Weighting is still paid as a separate element where appropriate.
3. Variable pay is pensionable.
4. Field managers spend at least 80 per cent of their working time 'in the field'.
5. Field managers do not have dedicated office space within BT buildings, but are provided with:
   a) a company vehicle
   b) the necessary communications systems *ie* mobile phone, fax at home (with dedicated line), laptop with modem
   c) access to office accommodation and services as required

6 Any time worked in excess of the normal 42 hour week (41 hours in London) is compensated by time off in lieu which must be taken within two weeks. Field managers are expected to manage their own time, in consultation with colleagues and line managers, and are not subject to formal rostering or on-call arrangements and there is no requirement to work a seven day week.

Bradford Pennine Insurance has an agreement with the Banking, Finance and Insurance Union, BIFU, that union representatives are be supplied with the telephone numbers, names and addresses of all mobile workers to facilitate recruitment and organisation.

6. Relocated Back-offices

In principle, there would appear to be no reason why the terms and conditions of employment which prevail in remote offices should not be exactly the same as those in head offices or other branch offices. In practice, however, it appears that the differences are often considerable. Sometimes these flow from the nature of the division of labour in the organisation. If the only work carried out in a particular office consists of a single, routine function (such as dealing with customer inquiries, or data entry) then there will be little scope for promotion to other kinds of work for staff wishing to remain on the same site. However, some of the other differences are less easily explained, leading to a suspicion that some employers may take advantage of the relocation in order to introduce other changes which lead to inferior conditions or reduced opportunities for workers in remote centres.

Good practice in the employment of teleworkers in this category includes:

1. Staff being made redundant from other branches in the organisation should have the right to move voluntarily to remote centres without loss of continuity of employment or any worsening of pay or conditions.
2. There should be parity between workers in remote centres with head office staff or, where the head office is in a different country, with branch office staff in the same country.
3. Staff in relocated back offices should be employed on permanent contracts.
4. Access to staff appraisal, development and training in relocated back offices should be on the same basis as in other branches of the organisation.
5. Staff employed in relocated back office should be covered by the same promotion procedures as apply in the rest of the

organisation and should have the right to apply for alternative work at any time.

6. Any staff relocating to or from the relocated offices should be given assistance with the costs of moving house and, where necessary, their spouses or partners should be given assistance in finding alternative employment.
7. Any positive action schemes which exist in the rest of the organisation should also apply to relocated back offices.
8. Employers should consider the provision of childcare facilities at relocated back offices.
9. Employers should avoid the use of machine monitoring, payment by results or other measures which are likely to create stressful or hazardous working conditions for staff carrying out repetitive work.
10. Employers should provide a safe working environment and provide full training in safe working procedures to all staff, paying particular attention to those making intensive use of equipment at relocated back offices.
11. Full trade union recognition and negotiation rights should apply in relocated back offices on the same basis as any other parts of the organisation.
12. Workers having to work in the evenings, at night, at weekends or during public holidays should be entitled to overtime pay, shift premia or additional time off in lieu as compensation.
13. Attention should be paid to ensuring adequate travel arrangements and personal security for shift workers having to travel to or from the workplace outside normal working hours.

Examples of good practice

Midland Bank has made a commitment to redeploying staff faced with redundancy to suitable alternative positions at the same or a higher grade within the company if they so wish. This applies to all staff except those under 18 and those within three years of normal retirement for whom redeployment is discretionary. If the only suitable position is at a lower grade, the existing salary is maintained. Removal expenses are paid for those for whom this redeployment involves relocation. The company offers counselling to help staff decide whether or not to accept redeployment.

7. Other Forms of Support for Teleworkers

In the preceding chapters we have outlined some of the measures which can be adopted by employers of teleworkers to ensure that this form of employment enhances, rather than reduces, the quality of working life and the range of opportunities open to them.

However there are other measures which can contribute towards the same goals which it is beyond the power of individual employers to effect, and which are most appropriately implemented by other agencies.

In this section, we summarise some of such measures.

Training

If there is a single key to employment in the information society it is probably bears the label 'training'. The restructuring of work which accompanies the introduction of the new technologies brings with it an enormous, and accelerating, demand for a wide range of new skills on the part of an ever-growing section of the population. There is a need, amongst others, for:

1. training courses for the unemployed, including people who have been out of the workforce caring for children or the sick or elderly, to equip them with a range of generic information technology and communications (ICT) skills and job-specific skills required in the local labour market
2. training courses for those already in office-based employment, to enable them to upgrade their existing skills and acquire new ICT skills
3. training courses for tele-homeworkers and other workers in low-skilled work, to give them access to a wider choice of employment opportunities

4. training courses for freelances to enable them to keep abreast of new technological developments and find new markets for their services
5. training for managers in the management of remote workers
6. special measures to encourage women to take up training in fields which have previously been male-dominated, especially new fields, such as multi-media production and digital editing, which are likely to increase in importance as the Information Society develops.

In designing these new training courses it is important to bear in mind that many of the target groups not only lack resources to pay for the cost of the training itself, but may also lack any source of income to support themselves or provide care for their dependants while they are in training. Many, especially low-paid women in the informal sector, will therefore be unable to avail themselves of these training opportunities unless resources are made available to provide a subsistence income and alternative care for dependants while they are being trained.

Information

The speed of change accompanying the introduction of new forms of working and the increasing dispersal of work makes access to up-to-date information increasingly difficult for many groups.

The provision of information therefore becomes an important factor in the facilitation of teleworking. This might include:

1. information for employers on the setting up and management of teleworking schemes including technical information, information about legal, contractual, planning, insurance and related issues, information about sources of advice and consultancy, and information about good employment practice
2. information for existing teleworkers about safe working practices, employment rights, sources of advice and training opportunities
3. information for training agencies about the skill requirements of teleworking
4. information for the unemployed about new work and training opportunities.

In some cases, the most appropriate means of providing this information might be through traditional paper-based means, such as leaflets, booklets or posters in the relevant languages. In

other cases, electronic media such as pages on the World Wide Web or interactive CD ROM might be more appropriate.

Finally, person-to-person dissemination of information, for instance through help-lines, conferences, seminars, courses and briefings of advice workers may also have an important role to play in spreading awareness.

In some cases it might be appropriate to develop publicity campaigns to promote successful models of teleworking. An example of this is the annual Telework Award which is presented, on television, in the Netherlands to the scheme which shows the best practice in teleworking.

Labour market initiatives

One of the difficulties created by the increasing fragmentation of work and geographical dispersal of the workforce is an increasing mismatch between traditional labour market mechanisms and the realities of the modern labour market. Job search methods which worked well, and fairly, for filling vacancies in a traditional office environment, drawing its workforce from a relatively small geographical area, cannot always meet the needs of employers, or workers, in a labour market increasingly characterised by short-term employment and remote work. There is a danger that this will result in a return by employers to recruitment methods which rely on word of mouth, and thus favour those with existing contacts, who occupy the same friendship networks as the employers, and exclude those who occupy different social worlds.

This can have the effect of indirectly discriminating against ethnic minorities and women and people with disabilities who, because they are more tied to the domestic environment, are less likely to be in a position to make contacts through informal means (such as contacts with sporting or drinking companions). As well as being discriminatory in their effects, these developments often mean that employers are drawing on a very narrow pool of talent and not necessarily appointing the best person for the job, which results in a reduction in overall quality. It is therefore important to develop new mechanisms for recruitment, especially for casual or freelance staff, and for people in remote locations (such as rural telecottages).

These might include:

1. compiling directories of freelance teleworkers (either paper-based or on-line) for the use of employers
2. compiling directories of employers who employ teleworkers, including their rates of pay and conditions of service, for the use of unemployed or freelance teleworkers. Again, these could be either paper-based or on-line.
3. developing new services for advertising vacancies on the Internet
4. offering advice and support to telecottages, co-operatives and networks of freelance workers to assist them in marketing their services to remote employers
5. running or funding training courses in self-promotion and marketing for unemployed or freelance teleworkers.

Enterprise support

There are a variety of ways in which economic development agencies can support the development of innovative new enterprises which can create new teleworking employment opportunities. These include:

1. assistance with market research and feasibility studies for the development of new information products and services
2. encouraging the translation of existing information products into new languages and the development (for a world market) of on-line information services in all languages spoken in Europe. Some such developments could be facilitated by the development of new and more sophisticated translation software.
3. special support for women wishing to become entrepreneurs in fields in which they have traditionally been under-represented
4. support for projects set up to produce programmes or information products designed to promote positive images of women in the new electronic media.

Social infrastructure

If the choice to become a teleworker is to be a free one, then it must be made in a context where genuine alternatives are on offer. This will only be possible where the appropriate social provision exists to enable people to work outside the home if they so choose. Such social provision includes:

- childcare facilities
- facilities for the day-care of frail adults
- safe public transport.

Examples of good practice

The Teleworkcentre in Lochem was set up in 1994, by the Heidemij company and the Association of Rural Women, to offer farmers' wives the possibility of a part-time job outside the farm, without having to move or travel long distances. By June 1995 the centre had trained 31 women, five of whom had found regular jobs in other companies. The centre itself employs 12 part-timers, six on temporary freelance contracts and six on a regular basis. For the farmers' wives the centre does seem attractive; many of them apply for training and work. Other rural regions are now setting up similar projects.

The Telecottage Association was set up in England in 1992 largely as a result of the success of a two-year teleworking project set up by the Association of Rural Community Councils in England (ACRE). In late 1992 the project had generated a considerable amount of awareness and support for telework, both home-based and in telecottages and over 2,000 people received the project's regular newsletter. The telework association produced a business plan and attracted further support for a two to three year period from BT, the Rural Development Commission and Apple Computers UK, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, the National Rural Enterprise Centre and Kay and Co. Ltd.

The Association which began with 400 members now has 2,400 paid up members, including over 140 affiliated telecottages. It publishes a bi-monthly magazine, runs seminars and is more or less self financing.

The Association's Executive Director works from home and all other administrative work (including dealing with routine phone calls) has been subcontracted out to affiliated telecottages. The Association's directors regularly hold meetings by telephone conference, using the community teleconference facilities provided to the voluntary sector by the registered charity Community Network.

The Association is the first point of contact for the English telecottage movement and works closely with national associations in Scotland, Wales and Ireland.

The National Union of Journalists is a trade union which represents journalists working in newspapers, magazines, books, radio and television and public relations in the United Kingdom

and Ireland. The media industries have a long tradition of freelance working and the over the years the NUJ has built up considerable experience in the recruitment, organisation and representation of freelance workers. Because of major restructuring in all the media industries in recent years, the NUJ has seen a growth in its freelance membership who now number approximately a quarter of total membership.

The NUJ has carried out surveys of its freelance membership and discovered that:

- freelances earn on average less than staff journalists
- freelances are more likely to be female than staff journalists
- nearly half were forced into self-employment when made redundant from staff jobs
- freelances have a range of needs quite distinct from the demands made by the staff journalists on the union. These include advice on tax, copyright and the negotiation of contracts and a need for training.

In response to this evidence, the Union has developed a range of innovative initiatives including the publication of a Freelance Directory to put employers in touch with suitable freelance reporters, photographers, sub-editors, indexers and a range of other media skills, the setting up of an E-mail network for NUJ members and a range of training courses for freelance members which are consistently over-subscribed.

Manchester City Council, in 1989, began to develop plans for a local computer information and communications service which eventually took the form of a database server offering E-mail, bulletin boards, fax and telex facilities. Known as the Manchester Host it was launched in 1991. At the same time three community projects received funding from BT's community funds to the tune of £250,000, and a number of smaller organisations, to become Electronic Village Halls (EVH) based on a Scandinavian model. The three successful projects were the Chorlton Workshop, a well established community based training organisation, the Bangladesh House Electronic Village Hall, and the Women's Electronic Village Hall.

Although there were suggestions that the Electronic Village Halls might provide the possibility of communal teleworking particularly for women with small children, in practice the projects have been more training based.

The Chorlton workshop has tried to target the unemployed and in particular people who would not normally go to college and gives priority to ethnic minorities and people with pre-school children. Their training programme typically includes a ten-week introductory computing course held for two hours a week, and leading to a recognised vocational qualification. There is a crèche for children aged between six months and five years, normally available whilst courses are running. There are also computer drop-in sessions for women with the chance to explore the Internet. The workshop also advertises its ICT facilities for hire at low cost to local organisations and small businesses.

The Bangladesh House Electronic Village Hall also concentrates primarily on training courses with recognised accreditation. It is also associated with the Manchester Asian Trading Information Network (Matin) project, which aims to develop computerised information links between Asian owned businesses in the city, as well as between them and businesses and institutions in the Indian subcontinent.

The Women's Electronic Village Hall offers women computer training with child care expenses paid for those participating. It has a comprehensive range of equipment, including equipment adapted for people with disabilities, which is available for use by individuals and women's groups. The centre is fully accessible to all women and has drop-in access.

The Government of Finland has given teleworking a central place in its economic development strategy. The development of telework and telecottage activities are considered an important part of Finnish rural policy. At the beginning of the 1990s there were just under 100 telecottages in Finland. The most successful of these were in the Pelagic islands where a comprehensive development programme, the Development Project for the Archipelago of Varsinais-Suomi (= Finland Proper), was carried out.

Telework in Finland is seen as a way of supporting the expansion of a new working culture, and in particular, of supporting small businesses in the rural areas, and creating a new action culture in the Finnish communities suffering from unemployment through collaboration with voluntary organisations to encourage voluntary work.

Proposed action in the field of telework by Finland's National Telework Development Programme includes:

1. International co-operation with other Nordic countries and particularly in the Baltic and Russia with the aim of setting up virtual offices in these areas for an experimental period of three to five years.
2. The incorporation of teleworking into regional development programmes by setting up local telework projects (in conjunction with the labour adminstration, universities and other educational establishments, local enterprises, community groups and municipalities) to provide business support and training.
3. The promotion of teleworking and business networking by a range of educational institutions. This scheme is to be financed jointly by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour.
4. Research on business networking including action by the Ministry of Trade and Industry together with TEKES and business organisations to investigate how small businesses could raise the share of customer oriented production development in their own operations through co-operative networking, and create new co-operation structures with universities and research bodies to increase their internationalisation and improve their marketing.
5. Promotion of Telework in the Public Sector (in order to reduce work-related travel and decrease environmental impact) by redirecting investment from physical transport to information technology infrastructures.
6. The establishment of 'Joint Service Centres', communal front offices where local organisations can take advantage of economies of scale by sharing resources and workers can be given greater security of employment than if they were employed casually by individual organisations.

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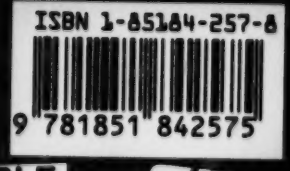

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